

Subject: INFO-HAMS Digest V89 #880
To: INFO-HAMS@WSMR-SIMTEL20.ARMY.MIL

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Today's Topics:

Letter from the FCC: 20M Maritime Mobile Net

Date: 14 Nov 89 18:15:47 GMT
From: mips!wyse!steve@apple.com (Steve Wilson xtemp dept303)
Subject: Letter from the FCC: 20M Maritime Mobile Net

In article <574@rsiatl.UUCP> jgd@rsiatl.UUCP (John G. De Armond) writes:
>channels than with the service they perform. And ARES is usually
>overloaded with the Brown Shirt brigade types. (00s in ARRL parlance).

The fact that I'm the 00 Co-Ordinator for the Section has nothing
to do with ARES ;-). Seriously, I can guarantee you that there are
a total of 2 00's in the 100 or so I mentioned in our county ARES
organization. That should give you a clue as to how few 00's we
have in the 5 counties I cover...I need more...any volunteers?

>On the other hand, in areas where there HAS been a credible emergency
>service, it has almost invariably been disassociated with the ARRL.
>I'll freely admit that I've not spent enough time in the West to have
>an opinion. I'm absolutely sure your organization works. I'm just
>as sure that if the ARES shroud were removed, it would work at least
>as well if not better.

The one problem we do have on the West coast isn't so much whether ARES
is credible versus some other organization, but ARES versus RACES. The
state recognizes RACES, and these are the birds that are fairly well
entrenched and doing "Their Own Thing." My county took a more interesting
approach to the situation about 6 years ago. The county government
decided that ARES=RACES. End of discussion. Really helps things, we
wear which ever hat is appropriate.

>But you don't understand. As an emergency manager, given at least a
>tiny amount of money, I WOULD find a way to communicate if ham radio
>was not available. I could not accept "can't" as an answer. This
>concept is central to my point. Hams are used because they are free
>and available and mostly useful. Have them go away and we'll find
>other means. If the managers and their political bosses in an
>area CANNOT do this, they should be replaced.

This is another difference between where we live. We have professionals
to deal with HAZMATS, etc, i.e. several cities have on-staff chemists

for just such events. These guys are on loan via mutual aid agreements to the smaller cities within the county. The fire departments drill for this type of stuff regularly. This is a VERY industrialized area with lots of chemical processing going on. Hams are going to be used in a citizen's support role, i.e. shelters typically. The one situation that it is planned that we respond to the seen of an incident is when there is a major number of fatalities, i.e. like a plane crash. In this situation we wind up providing tactical comm to the hospitals as well as quite a bit of tactical comm at the scene. As for other groups doing the job we do, there isn't any currently trained to do it, and we are the volunteer pool that has been identified by government(at all levels mind you) that is responsible for this support role.

>Not at all. Sorry to have left that impression. I wore 2 hats. One
>was the RSO for a large area encompassing 2 nuclear power plants, a
>major North-South freeway, and which lies just outside Oak Ridge.
>Nuclear monitoring is a concern. But my other role as communications
>officer took most of the time. Because of a high concentration of
>chemical manufacturing and because of freak weather conditions, most
>of my time was spent worrying about HAZMAT incidents (about one major one a
>month) and tornados (several during my tenure).

>

>NO! And this is the most critical point I'm trying to get across here
>relative to emergency service. I do not need "arbitrary units of
>communications". I need people who have the capability to set up
>communications links AND do something productive. I cannot afford
>to send hams into situations where they are oblivious to what is
>happening and who have to be watched like children. I'm using
>strong but accurate language here. Neither can I expose more personnel
>than absolutely necessary to a hazard whether it be nuclear, chemical
>or whatever. It violates all concepts of ALARA to have unnecessary
>personnel in a hazard zone. Hams who can do nothing besides communicate
>are worse than worthless.

This is where I'm going to ask you if you've ever heard of the Incident Command System. It is a management system that we use in California to deal with multi-jurisdictional situations like wild-land fires. The system presents a management structure to run large events under and supports a common language to be used by the participants(no more 10's code Thank GOD). Within this structure there is a definition of each major function that is needed in a large event such as "Incident Commander, Public Information Officer, Tactical," etc. Part of this is the communications team. Most local fire departments use this system even during waste-bucket fires. This is one of the reasons we try and keep to a strictly communications role. We have a well-defined set of duties that we are qualified for within this system. If we respond to a large fire, or plane crash, or what-ever, the hat we wear and what we are responsible for is pre-defined. There are other guys to do other

jobs. This orientation carries through into the different kinds of activities we are willing to accept as an organization, and on a counter note this is what the local governments look to us for.

>I agree that this kind of service is non-traditional. When I started,
>the Director or Chiefs would never have thought of integrating ham
>radio into the emergency plan. The image of the slob with the broken
>equipment and loud mouth was firmly entrenched. But we showed them that
>hams COULD take on other than support roles. Those active roles will
>be remembered long after the station at the shelter is forgotten. IT
>puts ham radio in a vastly more powerful position to be written in as
>an integral part of the emergency plan.

As I've defined earlier, this just doesn't fit into what we see as the needs of our served agencies locally. If they want somebody to do search-and-rescue operations, they call the SAR people. There are several hams in the SAR groups typically, but they aren't usually associated with ARES. This is due to the fact that 1) they aren't really available to us to use as a resource during events. 2) The types of assignments we accept are different from what they are trained for. These kinds of groups also exist but they are highly specialized at what they do just as we are.

>>If you use the hams
>>in the areas that they are already schooled in you'll have a higher
>>rate of success.

>

>I suspect it is less a problem in your area but here, ham radio is
>firmly a blue collar hobby. The typical ham is rather poorly
>technically educated.

True enough. Within my city ARES group the majority hold BS degrees in either computer science or electrical engineering. That's not to say that the one house-wife that I have doesn't do a credible job! In fact, she is fast becoming a very solid Net control. She got a lot of practice recently :-). Another small detail is half of them are extra class licensees and have been licensed on an average of 15 years, i.e. pre-BASH, etc. The background of my group is probably typical of the local ARES members though my group is probably a bit heavy in the experience area(thankfully).

>He has an interest in talking on the radio
>and perhaps dabbling in packet but from my perspective, he starts out
>as a block of clay to be shaped through training to work efficiently
>in emergency services. Things like reading a radiation meter or
>taking air samples or tagging along with a chief to provide tactical
>communications is not hard to teach and is actually fun.

>

>Unfortunately, a lot of hams I've dealt with are acutely self-conscious

>about their lack of technical skills. They tend to cover for this
>problem by throwing up a front and refusing amidst a large huff, any
>attempt at training. I have learned to work around this problem but
>it IS a problem.

I don't seem to experience this problem locally. no comment.

>>If you take a normal citizen off the street he can
>>be trained with some effort to look at a meter, read same, etc.
>>Is it as easy to take somebody off the street and ask him to install
>>a working antenna system?

>

>Quite frankly, yes. Anyone who is handy with tools can take an antenna
>out of a package, hook cable up to it, and plug the transceiver in.
>That is the extent of many ham's technical knowledge these days.

I just can't except this. You forgot a couple of small details like
making the darn thing be more than just a dead short to the radio.
Few are the antennas that I've seen that have an acceptable match the first
time you put them up.

> stuff deleted to save a wee bit of net bandwidth....

>I am by no means afraid of the FCC. Most people who know me on the
>air know that I make extremely liberal interpretations of the rules.
>Hey, I've never had a pink slip so why not? :-) :-)

>

>On the other hand, I DID spend the first 8 years of my career in
>government service. I saw firsthand how a pissed off bureaucrat,
>especially one who senses some degree of public support, can muck
>up the works. You have to remember that many bureaucrats exist
>for the principle function of fouling peoples' lives up. In this
>game, we will be vastly better off if we get along with the power
>structure rather than bucking it. You must remember that we are a
>tiny minority.

>

>I hope the FCC does NOT take the "work for the public" bit too seriously.
>The public's interest and ours rarely coincide.

Again this is one area that we are going to continue to disagree.
Why is the DOD suing the FCC? ;-)

> stuff deleted...

>First thing you know, Ted Koppel will do a NightLine on the subject. He'll
>have a Commissioner on one side and some fast talking, shrill, blathermouth
>from "Citizen Communication Watch" on the other side. etc....

> stuff deleted...

>You think that could not happen? Just take one look at the media-
>created Assault Rifle Ban hysteria to see a textbook case.

The main problem I see with this is that the system is already in place and works fairly well in what ever incarnation you run into it. Hams have been doing these jobs regularly and for a long time. It could happen and I'd personally become VERY active politically if I perceived such an item. To me the best defense is certainly a strong offense. The best way to prevent the problem is through politically organizing what we already have. Certainly this is the one beef I've had with the ARRL ever since I've been a member(1974 I think) in that they aren't more politically active. I was just informed a couple of weeks ago that the main reason the ARRL doesn't actively lobby is because of their non-profit status. I don't know if this is valid...Any comments anyone?

>> If FCC makes
>>rules we don't like then we have the right/obligation to petition
>>them to change these rules.
>
>I agree. But we've got to make more of a case than simply that we deserve
>better!
>
>Yep, and even if we all managed to agree on something (did the earth
>stop turning? :-), we'd still be a squeak.

We've got the ammo, we just don't bother telling anyone. We agree here. Yes the earth did just stop for second...

>One thing I believe many hams have not yet realized is that for years
>we had a very, very critical and very powerful ally in Barry Goldwater.
>Barry's gone and I've yet to see anyone even start to fill in. What
>is now happening is simply that we're being exposed to the (ab)normal
>operation of politics.

No disagreement here...though I will point out that Senator Pete Wilson from California is the one who introduced the resolution concerning ham radio last year. I've got hopes for him...We'll see. By the way, Berry is interviews on "Firing Line" this week on PBS and mentions that he is a ham ;-)

>>
>>This is what the ARES should be doing in your local(in conjunction with
>>the local ham club!). When hams talk to the agencies they serve they
>>find out what kinds of supplemental comm is needed. This is certainly
>>the place to start!.
>
>I disagree strongly. ARES has nothing to do with it. This is quite

>properly a local club function. This idea was locally conceived and
>locally executed. Yes, there are a lot of hams participating who are
>ARES members. I consider that a personal choice of no import to the
>mission. I hope I can take a tiny bit of credit here. I've dressed
>down a number of ARES people for the worthless activities that
>formerly were the norm. And I'm damn sure not part of ARES.

See, this is something your missing. Most ARES members belong to a ham club. It's a natural way to get more people interested in the program, and good exercise for the rest of ARES as well. You gripe about the quality of ARES people in your area, but aren't willing to help train them in the areas they've already declared an interest in by becoming ARES affiliated. Again, why don't you expend some of your efforts in reforming the ARES group. Become part of the leadership so you can exercise some guidance! Any group is typically only as good as their leadership, and this is certainly no exception. Its easy to gripe, its much harder to step in and try to fix the problem. This isn't meant to in any way demean your accomplishments, just to point out that there are other ways to a goal.

> stuff deleted...

>

>A second very important lesson was learned from this exercise. The bulk
>of the hospital traffic was handled over a cellular phone I supplied
>along with a power supply to run it. The Cell service, being microwave,
>was working fine. This may not always be the case but who cares.
>It was working that time and we took advantage of it. How many times
>have you heard hams absolutely refuse to interoperate with other media?
>How many packet BBS sysops have you heard totally dismiss any possibility
>of making up missing links with dialup connections? A bunch in my case.

Oh, last summer as an example. We had a multi-county bike race. The guy that organized the communications for it(N6KL or ARESdata fame) did a smash up job. For the first time cellular telephone was available. Dave programmed one of the local 220 machines to dial the different celstel numbers, and gave all the celstel operators the repeater's phone number. Worked great! Of course there were lots of places that the celstel didn't work, but this is what ham radio is for ;-)

As for the BBS system, first off I believe its technically a bit more difficult to put in place both a land line and radio based BBS, i.e. I don't believe its part of the standard packages available. On the other hand I'm extremely impressed with how the local packet BBS's/LANs reconfigured themselves to handle the H&W traffic that arrived. They had completely re-routed the entire system within 3 hours. In other words, they figured out which nodes were gone and completely re-did the setup! This lashup system handled between

7000 and 10000 H&W messages over the next week. Not bad!

73's de Steve KA6S

End of INFO-HAMS Digest V89 Issue #880
